

Date: May 19, 2015

To: City Council

From: Minnie Forte-Brown, Education Task Force Co-Chair

Subject: Poverty Reduction Initiative; Education Task Force Update

Executive Summary

In response to the Mayor's Poverty Reduction Initiative (PRI) that focuses on Census Tract 10.01, a number of task forces were created to look at different aspects of reducing poverty, supporting services and building wealth in this low-wealth area of the City. Council Representatives and others co-chair the Task Forces. This Agenda Item is an interim report from the Education Task Force co-chair Minnie Forte-Brown.

Background

The Education Task Force has been meeting over the past year. Guided by the PRI's survey of residents and their needs, Task Force members identified these areas of focus: (1) Ages newborn to five-years-old (early childhood); (2) Middle School challenges; (3) College Ready and Persistence Strategy; (4) Family Collaboration and Sustainability.

Issues/Analysis

While there are many promising ideas and programs involving education, the Education Task Force has settled on four strategies to pursue in the near term.

The most important component in completing the strategies is to create a pipeline out of **poverty** and **education** is the most viable, accessible, attainable and reliable way to do it.

Priority: Ages newborn to five-years-old

Action Steps Completed: (1) Increase child development by targeting existing programs in the impact area. Engage 25 families with children entering the LEAP (Latino Educational Achievement Project) to form a cohort. This cohort also teaches parent-child engagement, known as PACT, during which the family learns to study together. Program kicked off in February 2015.

Upcoming Steps: Program continues to date with expansion of other resources for youth and families including EDCI, YMCA, and the United Way.

Priority: Elementary/Middle School

Action Steps Completed: (1) Parental education on how middle schools work, especially the opportunity for advanced math in the eighth grade which is preceded by more challenging math work in seventh grade, is especially important for access to honors courses in the ninth grade.

Upcoming Steps: Continue to connect parents to EDCI/DPS advocates beginning in August 2015. Connect students to community mentors beginning August 2015. Expanding programs like Stepping Stones (Duke University), Camp High Hope (YMCA), Morehead Planetarium Science Camp, Exxon Mobile STEM Camp and StudentU in the census track.

Priority: College Ready and Persistence Strategy

Action Steps Completed: (1) ACT/SAT Prep (beginning in 9th grade): With collaboration from A-Plus Test Prep and Movement of Youth, at least 10 seniors from Southern High School (in the census track) were provided intensive assistance with their preparation for college applications, selection, transition, and completion. The work includes SAT/ACT preparation; help with completing FAFSA and other financial-aid related documents, guidance on matching their interests with college options, and assistance for families on the kinds of emotional and organizational support needed for success in college.

Upcoming Steps: (1) Connect students to internships in their areas of interest with the assistance of Movement of Youth, EVOLVE, National Society of Black Engineers and Made in Durham. (2) Initiate partnership with American Underground to facilitate a Coding Academy (funded by Innovation Fund Grant) (3) DPR campus-to-campus high school tours. (4) Offer job ready skills. Scheduled to begin in August 2015.

Priority: Family Collaboration and Sustainability

Action Steps Completed: (1) Used survey to determine specific needs of parents and guardians to help them set educational goals for their children.

Upcoming Steps: (1) Provide employment and other educational opportunities for parents and guardians with the assistance of REAL Durham, Village of Wisdom beginning in September 2015. (2) Create family cohorts to offer GED or Trade School training by Holton Resource Center.

In summary, we have an excellent opportunity to work with other educational partners to achieve the overall objective of Anti-Poverty Task Force Initiatives. Despite the challenges, PRI's survey of residents indicates they want the best for their children and will be willing to put forth the necessary effort if their voices are heard. Our Task Force is working hard to help make a significant difference and impact in the lives of parents, children and guardians in the Mayor's identified census track.

Alternatives: Not applicable

Financial Impact

Not applicable with this request to receive a presentation.

SDBE Summary: Not applicable